

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR of RAISED BILL No. 133

AN ACT ALLOWING POLICE OFFICERS TO WEAR RELIGIOUS HEAD COVERINGS AS PART OF A POLICE UNIFORM.

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Mohinder Singh Kalsi from Norwalk CT and I am licensed engineer in the State of Connecticut. First of all, I would like to thank you for this opportunity for written testimony in favor of Raised Bill No.133 (An Act allowing police officers to wear religious head coverings as part of a police uniform) in front of the Connecticut Public Safety and Security Committee.

Just for your information, Sikhism is the 5th largest organized, independent, and ethnic religion in the world with more than fifty million followers worldwide recognized all around the globe. Sikh Turban known as "Dastaar" is an integral part of the Sikh faith that signifies a commitment to uphold dignity, freedom, social justice, and equality for all.

As a Sikh, wearing of Dastar or turban as an essential part of my Sikh faith. There are so many other members in various field of public service ranging from State office positions, doctors, engineers and military members who have been allowed to practice their faith in their duties.

Sikhs have been positively contributing not just economically but also towards the cultural fabric of Connecticut for over 50 years and this bill will allow Sikhs to serve their communities with their articles of faith in law enforcement in their respective cities and towns.

At State level, the State has restricted turbaned Sikhs from Service in the Police force. Yet, **the city of Trumbull has taken a lead to recruit a Sikh gentleman as a member of their police force** just like New York Police Department provided this opportunity to more than 100 Sikhs to serve with their religious headwear. Also, Sikhs have been giving religious accommodation to serve in U.S Military, U.S Air force with its articles of faith and now we have many ranking officers proudly serving our country.

The lack of understanding and ignorance, the Sikhs have been victims of 9/11 hate crimes So this bill will not just help us break those barriers in society created by ignorance but will help our police departments to hire people from various faith backgrounds that represent our state's diverse population that will promote diversity and inclusiveness. Thus, I respectfully request you to consider this bill and welcome other future bills as well which will help us create Connecticut that reflects our diversity.

I look forward to working with you all to make well educated and informed community in Connecticut which embraces its diverse population and celebrates its multiculturalism.

On behalf of Sikhs of Connecticut, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Senator Bob Duff to raise this resolution allowing Sikhs to serve in State Police force so that Sikhs can enjoy the unalienable Rights that among those are life, Liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Signed by: Mohinder Singh Kalsi

February 22, 2022